



Wind turbines work in Livermore, Calif., Aug. 10, 2022.

Associated Press
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U.S. energy panel approves rule to expand transmission of renewable power

By MATTHEW DALY

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal energy regulators on Monday approved a long-awaited rule to make it easier to transmit renewable energy such as wind and solar power to the electric grid — a key part of President Joe Biden's goal to eliminate carbon emissions economy-wide by 2050.

The rule, under development for two years, is aimed at boosting the nation's aging power grid to meet surging demand fueled by huge data centers, electrification of vehicles and buildings, artificial intelligence and other uses.

The increased demand comes as coal-fired power plants continue to be retired amid competition from

natural gas, and other energy sources face increasingly strict federal pollution rules, setting up what experts say could be a crisis for electric reliability. The grid is also being tested by more frequent service disruptions during extreme weather events driven by climate change.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved the new rule, 2-1,

with Chairman Willie Phillips and fellow Democratic commissioner Allison Clements voting in favor. Republican Mark Christie opposed the rule, dismissing it as a gift to solar and wind power operators.

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U.S. energy panel approves rule to expand transmission of renewable power

Continued from Front

The sprawling, 1,300-page rule, which addresses transmission planning and cost allocations, will enhance the country's aging grid and ensure U.S. homes and businesses keep the lights on for decades to come, Phillips said.

"This rule cannot come fast enough," he said at a packed commission meeting at the agency's Washington headquarters. "There is an urgent need to act to ensure the reliability and the affordability of our grid."

The U.S. power grid "is at a make-or-break moment" and is being tested every day, Phillips said, citing "phenomenal load-growth from a domestic manufacturing boom, unprecedented construction of data centers fueling an AI revolution and ever-expanding electrification" of vehicles and buildings.

At the same time, aging infrastructure, shifting economics and a range of state and federal policies are leading traditional resources to retire, he said. "On top of all of this, extreme weather events have become the norm, and the electric grid is routinely being pushed to the brink."

At the same time, construction of high-voltage power lines declined to a record low in 2022, "and much of that construction was simply Band-Aid fixes, rather than



A solar farm sits Aug. 9, 2022, in Mona, Utah.

Associated Press

building a visionary grid of the future," Phillips said.

Many power companies and Republican-led states don't want to spend money on new transmission lines or upgrades for renewable energy, creating conflicts with Democratic states that have ambitious clean-energy goals.

Christie, the lone Republican on the three-member panel, said the rule "utterly fails to protect consumers" and ensure reliable, low-priced power for American homes and businesses.

"Instead, this rule is a pretext to enact a sweeping policy agenda that Congress never passed," he said. The rule will likely result in "a massive trans-

fer of wealth from consumers to for-profit special interests," primarily wind and solar operators, he said.

The rule is intended to streamline how power lines are sited and how costs are shared between states. It could accelerate construction of new transmission lines for wind, solar and other renewable power and add huge amounts of clean energy to the grid. Biden has set a goal of a carbon-free power sector by 2035, and net-zero carbon emissions economy-wide by 2050.

To meet those targets, the U.S. needs to more than double current regional transmission capacity and increase by five-

fold the transmission lines between regions, according to an Energy Department study last year.

Under current rules, a large queue of utility-scale renewables cannot be connected to the grid because of a lack of available transmission capacity. The rule updates the agency's planning process and seeks to determine how costs will be divided when transmission crosses state lines and goes through multiple operators of regional power grids.

White House climate adviser Ali Zaidi said the FERC rule adds momentum to what he called the "historic progress" led by Biden on clean energy.

The new rule "will improve regional transmission planning, break down barriers to grid buildout and support the delivery of more affordable and reliable power," Zaidi said. The new rule "is as common-sense as it is historic," Clements said, adding that it calls for more advanced planning and consideration of reliability and affordability of new power sources and fosters cooperation with states.

"Whether you're planning a family vacation or the nation's electricity system, planning early, taking a clear-eyed view of the options and making smart investment decisions will result in more affordable and reliable outcomes," she said.

Christie challenged the agency action.

Whether the policies promoted in the final rule "can be described as green, purple, red or blue is irrelevant," Christie said. "The point is that FERC as an independent agency has no business promoting the policies of any one party or presidential administration, especially when the effort to do so goes far beyond FERC's legal authority."

Clements responded by calling the rule "straight down the middle" as a legal matter. Democrats and clean-energy advocates hailed the new rule as a way to bring clean and cost-effective electricity onto the grid. □



Passengers arrive at Terminal C at Orlando International Airport, Monday, March 18, 2024, in Orlando, Fla.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. airlines are suing to block the Biden administration from requiring greater transparency over fees that the carriers charge their pas-

sengers, saying that a new rule would confuse consumers by giving them too much information during the ticket-buying process. The U.S. Transportation De-

U.S. airlines are suing the Biden administration over a new rule to make certain fees easier to spot

partment said Monday it will vigorously defend the rule against what it called "hidden junk fees."

American, Delta, United and three other carriers, along with their industry trade group, sued the Transportation Department in a federal appeals court on Friday, saying that the agency is going beyond its authority by attempting "to regulate private business operations in a thriving

marketplace."

The airlines said the administration hasn't shown that consumers can't get information about fees already. "Airlines go to great lengths to make their customers knowledgeable about these fees," the trade group Airlines for America said Monday. "The ancillary fee rule by the Department of Transportation will greatly confuse consumers who will be inundated with infor-

mation that will only serve to complicate the buying process."

The Transportation Department announced the new rule on April 24. It would require airlines and travel agents to disclose upfront any charges for baggage and canceling or changing a reservation. Airlines must show the fees on the first website page where they quote a price for a flight. □

Donald Trump's GOP allies show up in force as Michael Cohen takes the stand in hush money trial

By MEG KINNARD
Associated Press

With Donald Trump barred from publicly attacking the key witness in his hush money trial, his campaign brought to court a phalanx of Republican elected officials to speak for him.

"The thing that the president is prevented from saying, which is a disgrace, is that every single person involved in this prosecution is practically a Democratic political operative," U.S. Sen. JD Vance of Ohio said outside the courthouse Monday during a morning break.

Trump's former fixer Michael Cohen took the stand on Monday to allege that the former president instructed him to silence stories that could have hurt his 2016 presidential campaign. Trump, who is balancing the demands of a felony trial with his third run for the White House, has been prohibited by a judge's gag order from criticizing witnesses and already fined for violating the restrictions.

Bringing allies to court allowed Trump's campaign to press his message without violating the gag order. It also gave those allies a high-profile platform to demonstrate loyalty to their party's presumptive nominee and perhaps audition



Sen. J.D. Vance, R-Ohio, left, Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., second from left, and Rep. Nicole Malliotakis, R-N.Y., right, wait in the hallway outside the courtroom for the arrival of former President Donald Trump at Manhattan criminal court, Monday, May 13, 2024, in New York.

Associated Press

for higher office.

Vance, widely seen as a contender to be Trump's vice presidential pick, was part of a group that arrived at court with Trump and stood behind him as he addressed reporters before heading into the courtroom. It was the biggest single showing of the allies joining Trump in court for the hush money trial since it began last month.

Others in the group included Sen. Tommy Tuberville of

Alabama, U.S. Rep. Nicole Malliotakis of New York, and a pair of attorneys general, Steve Marshall of Alabama and Brenna Bird of Iowa. Vance was once a harsh critic who said he "can't stomach Trump" and called him "noxious."

Now, he is a close ally who will appear with Trump at an Ohio fundraiser on Wednesday, when the trial will be on break.

Vance posted a thread on the X social platform as he

headed to court with the former president, including a missive from the courtroom questioning Cohen's believability: "Cohen can't remember how old his son is or how old he was when he started to work for Trump but I'm sure he remembers extremely small details from years ago!"

He also leveled criticism directly at the daughter of Judge Juan M. Merchan, who is overseeing the case. The gag order pertaining to

Trump prohibits his critical comments about people affiliated with the case — except for Merchan and District Attorney Alvin Bragg — as well as Merchan's family members.

Outside court with Vance, Tuberville on Monday questioned the citizenship of the jurors and portrayed Bragg as a publicity-seeker.

"I am disappointed in looking at the American, supposedly American citizens in that courtroom, that the D.A. comes in, and he acts like it is his Super Bowl," said Tuberville, who made loyalty to Trump a central theme in his own 2020 campaign. "And I guess it is, to be noticed. But that's what's happening in this country. The Republican candidate for president of the United States is going through mental anguish in a courtroom. That's very depressing."

There have been one-off supportive trial appearances already, when allies including U.S. Sen. Rick Scott of Florida and Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton came to court with Trump. Both Scott and Paxton have been through legal troubles of their own, and have railed against what they call politically motivated prosecutions — a message that echoes Trump's own. □

Harris utters a profanity in advice to young Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris used a profanity on Monday while offering advice to young Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders about how to break through barriers. Harris was participating in a conversation moderated by actor and comedian Jimmy O. Yang when he asked her what it means to be the first vice president of Asian descent and how that heritage has informed her views and roles as a leader. Harris' mother was from India and her father was from Jamaica, and

she's the first woman elected vice president.

Harris gave a lengthy response in which she told the young people to keep their chins up when they go into spaces where no one else looks like them.

She added: "We have to know that sometimes people will open the door for you and leave it open. Sometimes they won't. And then you need to kick that f—— door down." The audience clapped and hollered. Laughing herself, Harris said, "Excuse my language."

Profanity in politics is not altogether unusual. This past weekend, presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump led a crowd at a rally chanting "bulls—" in reference to his criminal trial in New York City. When Joe Biden was vice president, he was overheard telling President Barack Obama that newly passed health care legislation was a "big f—— deal." Harris generally avoids such language in her public appearances.

The vice president made her comments in a conversation



Vice President Kamala Harris speaks during a campaign event in Elkins Park, Pa., May 8, 2024.

Associated Press

at the annual Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies Legislative Leadership Summit. The conversation was live-streamed on the White House website. Harris also was to speak

Monday evening, along with President Biden, at a White House Rose Garden reception celebrating May as Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. □

Canadian wildfire smoke chokes Upper Midwest for second straight year

By **TODD RICHMOND**

Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) —

Smoke from Canadian wildfires has prompted health warnings across the Upper Midwest and Montana for the second year in a row.

Fires raging in British Columbia and Alberta have filled the skies with haze over parts of Montana, the Dakotas, Minnesota and Wisconsin on Sunday, lingering into Monday morning.

Unhealthy air pollution levels mean everyone in Minnesota should stay indoors and avoid heavy exertion outdoors, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency said in its first statewide air quality alert of the season Sunday. Scheduled to end at noon Monday, the advisory was extended until 11 p.m. for southern Minnesota including the Twin Cities metro area.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources said the air quality was unhealthy for sensitive people in multiple counties across the state's northern two-thirds on Sunday. Set to end at noon Monday, the advisories were kept in place until midnight.

Michigan's Upper Peninsula was also under hazy skies Monday. Some people reported the smell of smoke, said Joe Phillips, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Marquette, Michi-



This photo provided by the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship shows a wildfire, Aurora Borealis overhead, near Fort Nelson, British Columbia Saturday, May 11, 2024.

Associated Press

gan.

Prevailing winds could send the smoke south and east as far as Iowa and Chicago, leaving skies looking milky by late Tuesday or early Wednesday, said Rafal Ogorek, a meteorologist in the National Weather Service's Chicago office. Most of the smoke was expected to linger over Minnesota, Wisconsin and northern Michigan, hanging between a mile (1.6 kilometers) and 2 miles (3 kilometers) above the ground.

A record number of wildfires in 2023 forced more than 235,000 people across Canada to evacuate and

sent thick smoke into parts of the U.S., prompting hazy skies and health advisories in multiple U.S. cities.

There were 200 fires burning in Canada by mid-May last year, compared with 90 fires as of this Sunday, said Dave Phillips, senior climatologist at Environment and Climate Change Canada, a government environmental protection agency. A fire raging near Fort Nelson in British Columbia's far northeastern corner has forced evacuations.

The chances of more wildfires this summer appear high. Lightning strikes could trigger fires that quickly

spread in forests suffering intense drought in north-eastern British Columbia, northwestern Alberta and the southern Northwest Territories, according the Canadian National Wildland Fire Situation report.

An analysis by World Weather Attribution, an initiative that aims to quickly evaluate the role of climate change in the aftermath of extreme weather events, found climate change more than doubled the chances of hot, dry weather that helped fuel the fire season.

Loretta Mickley, co-leader of Harvard University's At-

mospheric Chemistry Modeling Group, said her group did papers in 2013 and 2015 looking at fire activity and ecosystems with an eye toward the future. She said increasing fire activity is consistent with a warming climate.

Drought conditions look to be less severe in Ontario and Quebec in the coming months, but temperatures are expected to be higher than normal, and it's difficult to predict if the moisture will cancel out the heat, she said.

"What will happen this summer? It depends on what the meteorology is like today and what happened over the winter," she said. "In some regions a lot of rain in winter led to abundant vegetation. If that is followed by dryness or a drought then all that vegetation is ready to be burnt up and provide fuel to the fires."

If Canada does see a repeat of last year's fire season, it's far from clear if the U.S. will get haze on the scale of 2023. Fires in Quebec and Ontario produced most of the smoke that enveloped The Eastern U.S. — but those regions rarely see such large fires. Instead of pushing the smoke west, the wind drove it south, covering the eastern quarter of the U.S. from the Mississippi River Valley to Manhattan with haze. □



A U.S. Park Police officer inspects a security barrier for damage in Lafayette Square park near the White House, May 23, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

By **MICHAEL KUNZELMAN**

Associated Press

A Missouri man who crashed a rental truck into White

House barriers and showed a Nazi flag before his arrest last year pleaded guilty on Monday to damaging gov-

Nazi flag-bearing man who crashed a truck into barriers near the White House pleads guilty to felony

ernment property, court records show.

Sai Varshith Kandula, 20, drove a U-Haul truck onto a sidewalk, sending pedestrians running for safety, before ramming it into metal bollard barriers near White House grounds. He nearly struck two people who were standing next to a park bench, but nobody was injured.

Kandula faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison after pleading guilty to a felony charge of depredation of government property.

U.S. District Judge Dabney Friedrich is scheduled to sentence him on Aug. 23.

Prosecutors agreed to recommend a prison sentence no longer than eight years for Kandula, but the judge isn't bound by that term of his plea agreement.

Kandula, then 19, flew from St. Louis to Washington, D.C., and rented the truck in Herndon, Virginia, before crashing it into the barriers on May 22, 2023. After Kandula backed up and slammed into the bollards a second

time, the disabled truck began smoking from its engine compartment and leaking fluids.

Kandula was arrested after he exited the truck and retrieved a flag bearing a Nazi swastika from his backpack. Authorities didn't find any weapons, ammunition or explosives in his possession. Kandula told Secret Service agents that his goal was to "get to the White House, seize power and be put in charge of the nation," according to prosecutors. □

China and U.S. envoys will hold the first top-level dialogue on artificial intelligence in Geneva

By JAMEY KEATEN

Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — High-level envoys from the United States and China are set to meet in Geneva on Tuesday for talks about artificial intelligence, including the risks of the fast-evolving technology and ways to set shared standards to manage it.

The meeting, billed as an opening exchange of views, is the first under an intergovernmental dialogue on AI agreed upon during a multi-faceted meeting between U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping in San Francisco in November.

Both the U.S. and China see AI as crucial for national security and economic growth, with Biden administration officials saying they plan to focus on the development of safe, secure and trustworthy AI. The officials insisted on anonymity to preview the meeting on a phone call with reporters. They also said the U.S. would outline how it was addressing possible risks from the technology by creating voluntary commitments with the sector's



President Joe Biden, left, greets China's President Xi Jinping, right, in Woodside, USA, Nov. 15, 2023.

Associated Press

leading companies and requiring safety tests of AI products.

The U.S. government also sees efforts undertaken on AI by China as possibly undermining the national security of the United States and its allies, and Washington has been vying to stay ahead of Beijing on the use of AI in weapons systems. China's official Xinhua news

agency, citing the Foreign Ministry, said that the two sides would take up issues including the technological risks of AI and global governance.

Sam Bresnick, a research fellow at Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging Technology, said both the U.S. and China are investing heavily in AI for civilian and military

applications, but China has been "reluctant" to discuss the risks around AI with the United States.

"These meetings present an opportunity for U.S. officials to get a better sense of China's approach to defining and mitigating AI risks," Bresnick, who focuses on AI applications and Chinese technology policy, said in an email.

He played down any immediate prospect of binding agreements to ease risks linked to AI, but the talks "may help the two sides build trust" and understanding around AI issues.

The National Security Council at the White House said that the U.S. team is being led by presidential adviser and senior director for technology and national security, Tarun Chhabra, and the U.S. State Department's acting special envoy for critical and emerging technologies, Seth Center.

The meeting underlines the wider race by governments around the world to figure out how to rein in artificial intelligence even as the technology makes rapid advances and is poised to transform many aspects of daily life, from education and the workplace to copyright and privacy. Government leaders from a number of countries are expected to meet in Seoul next week for the second edition of talks on the safety of cutting-edge AI models, after a first round last year at a former wartime code-breaking base in Britain. □

Belfast judge says parts of the UK's migrant deportation law shouldn't apply to Northern Ireland

By BRIAN MELLEY

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The United Kingdom's law to deport asylum-seekers shouldn't apply in Northern Ireland, because parts of it violate human rights protections, a Belfast judge ruled Monday. The Illegal Migration Act was incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights and undermines rights provided in the Good Friday peace agreement of 1998, High Court Justice Michael Humphreys said.

U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said that the government would appeal the judgment.

The law is central to Sunak's contentious plan to deport some migrants to Rwanda, but it wasn't immediately clear what impact the ruling would have on that initiative. While the prime minister's office said the ruling wouldn't derail or delay Rwanda deportations that the U.K. government says will begin in July, a lawyer whose client prevailed in bringing the case said the law wouldn't apply in Northern Ireland.

"This is a huge thorn in the government's side," attorney Sinéad Marmion said. "There's a huge obstacle in the way of them being able to actually implement that

in Northern Ireland now."

The law was created to deter thousands of migrants who risk their lives crossing the English Channel to claim asylum in the U.K. by creating the prospect that they would be sent to the east African country. It allows those who have arrived illegally to be deported to a "safe" third country where their claims can be processed.

While the U.K. Supreme Court struck down flights to Rwanda, because it said that the nation was unsafe, a subsequent bill pronounced the country safe, and that makes it harder for migrants to challenge



Sinead Marmion, asylum and immigration solicitor at Phoenix Law, poses outside Belfast High Court in Belfast, Monday May 13, 2024.

Associated Press

deportation. It also allows the U.K. government to ignore injunctions from the European Court of Human Rights that seek to block removals.

Humphreys found that parts of the law violated human rights protections of a post-Brexit deal signed

between the U.K. and European Union last year. That agreement, known as the Windsor Framework, said that it must honor the peace accord that largely brought an end to the Troubles — 30 years of violence between British unionists and Irish nationalists. □

Australian judge lifts court ban on X showing video of Sydney church stabbing

By **ROD McGUIRK**

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)

— An Australian judge Monday lifted a ban on the social media platform X showing Australians a video of a bishop being stabbed in a Sydney church.

The temporary ban was put in place April 22, but the judge rejected the application from Australia's eSafety Commission to extend the court order that would have expired Monday.

Australian Federal Court Justice Geoffrey Kennett said he would publish his reasons for imposing and lifting the order later.

The decision was a win for the company rebranded by billionaire Elon Musk when he bought Twitter last year. X was alone among social media platforms in refusing to remove video of Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel being stabbed. Musk has argued that he is standing up for a freedom of speech principle. Australian lawmakers have accused him of arrogance and of lacking a sense of social responsibility.

"Not trying to win anything. I just don't think we should be suppressing Australian's rights to free speech," Musk posted on X after the ruling.



Australia's eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant attends a press conference at Parliament House in Canberra, June 15, 2021.

X is also taking a separate court action against eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant, a former Twitter employee, that challenges the validity of her notice requiring the platform to remove video of the April 15 attack in an Assyrian Orthodox church. The judge is expected to consider setting a hearing date Wednesday.

Assistant Treasurer Stephen Jones said the government might consider changing Australian law after read-

ing Kennett's reasons for removing his order that required X to hide the video from users.

"There's a fundamental principle at stake and that is, if you're a company or anybody operating in Australia, then you've got to abide by Australian laws," Jones said.

He also said the government supported Inman Grant's stance on the video. "She made the right decision in our view to ensure that that dangerous,

violent, harmful material wasn't being propagated online and encouraging and inciting that sort of behavior here in Australia," Jones said.

A 16-year-old boy was charged with terrorism-related offenses in the stabbings of the bishop and a priest who were injured in the attack.

X has geoblocked Australian users from the content, but eSafety wants a worldwide ban on the video, which can be still accessed

from Australia through VPNs. An eSafety lawyer, Tim Begbie, described X in court last week as a "market leader in proliferating and distributing violent content and violent and extremist material."

Begbie said Australia could not be expected to conform to X's "pro-free speech stance."

"The fact is that that stance is in large measure illusory. Because X doesn't stand for 'global removal is bad' in some pure sense," Begbie said.

X's own policies repeatedly refer to circumstances in which the platform will elect to remove content globally, Begbie said.

"The real position is this: X says that 'reasonable' means what X wants it to mean," Begbie said.

"Global removal is reasonable when X does it because X wants to do it. But it becomes unreasonable when X is told to do it by the laws of Australia," Begbie added.

X lawyer Bret Walker said X had taken reasonable steps to block the content from Australia but there had been glitches.

He described eSafety's demand for a global ban as astonishing and the notice as invalid. □



Malians take part in the annual replastering of the world's largest mud-brick building, the Great Mosque of Djenné, Mali, Sunday, May 12, 2024.

Associated Press

Associated Press

DJENNE, Mali (AP) — Thousands of Malians carrying buckets and jugs of mud

joined the annual replastering of the world's largest mud-brick building this weekend, a key ritual that

In Mali, thousands replaster the Great Mosque of Djenné, under threat from conflict

maintains the integrity of the Great Mosque of Djenné in the center of the country. The building has been on UNESCO's World Heritage in Danger list since 2016. The mosque and surrounding town, a historical center of Islamic learning, have been threatened by conflict between Islamist rebels, government forces and other groups.

Djenné's mosque requires a new layer of mud each year before the start of the rainy season in June, or the building will fall into disrepair. The replastering event once drew tens of thousands of tourists each year. As with

the rest of Mali, Djenné's tourism industry has all but completely disappeared. Amadou Ampate Cisse, a Djenné resident taking part in the event, told The Associated Press: "The plastering of the mosque is a symbol of peace. The poor, the rich, everyone is here for this activity. We will continue this tradition from generation to generation. We will pass it on to our children and they in turn will do the same."

Traditionally men and boys are responsible for climbing the mosque and applying the new layer of mud, while women and girls are responsible for fetching wa-

ter from the nearby river to mix with clay to make more of the mud needed for the event.

Moussa Moriba Diakité, head of Djenné's cultural mission, said that security has threatened the annual event. "A lot of people talk about insecurity, and we hear that we can't come to Djenné because there is insecurity," he said.

Despite the disappearance of Djenné's tourism industry, the maintenance of the mosque is something that must continue "at any cost", Diakité said, in order to preserve the country's cultural heritage. □

Snakes you may encounter on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—If you have ever or will ever go off-roading on the island, you may encounter three types of snakes that are dominant on the island. The Cascabel, Santanero and Boa differ from each other in a couple ways, and local perspective on each one may help you understand what you need to do if you ever were to encounter one during your touring session on the island.

Cascabel (*Crotalus unicolor*)

The small Cascabel or Aruba Island Rattlesnake averages 70 cm in length. The body color is often uniform gray or light brown. There may be a faint pattern of diamond shaped markings on the back. This pattern is most noticeable on younger snakes. The most distinctive feature of this snake is the rattle at the end of its tail which makes a buzzing sound when the snake is alarmed. Cascabels are shy and not aggressive, but their venom can be dangerous to humans. In fact, it's the only venomous snake native to the island. It is best to leave this snake alone. Do not attempt to catch or kill it, as it could not only be dangerous, but this snake is also endemic to the island, and its preservation has become a legal mandate for all residents and visitors.

Cascabels hunt by waiting under bushes and fruiting trees to catch passing lizards, mice, rats, small rabbits, and an occasional bird. This is often considered to be one of the rarest rattlesnakes in the world. The range of the Cascabel is restricted to the rugged and mountainous areas of the island mostly within Arikok National Park. The Arikok National Park was designated in the early 1980s to include most of the rattlesnake's population, providing a safe refuge in which the snake can be protected and monitored. The government has also implemented outreach and education initiatives to change local perception of the snake and highlight its ecological and economic importance – it is now being promoted as a national symbol. Arikok's partnership with the Toledo zoo has safeguarded the rattlesnake ex-situ and led to a number of research projects collecting critical data on the Cascabel's abundance, life history and habitat requirement to help guide future conservation efforts.

Santanero

The slender Santanero or Aruban Cat-eyed Snake is a small fella, typically less than 50 cm long. This snake is recognizable by the large scales on the top of its head and by its pattern of dark brown bands alternating with light brown bands. The belly is plain white or cream colored without any markings. Native as well to the island, this snake is shy and not aggressive. However, it has enlarged teeth at the back of its mouth and mild venom which is not dangerous to humans, but can paralyze small lizards and frogs. Santaneros are most active at night when they search for food. During the day, they hide under rocks or leaves. They frequently climb trees and cactus. Santaneros eat toads, frogs, insects, and lizards. You may find Santaneros near dams during periods of rainy weather or crossing roads at night. This snake is found island wide. A Santanero in your garden will keep away the unwanted insects. If you encounter a Santanero around your garden, please do not harm this species.

Boa (*Boa constrictor*)

Boas are Aruba's largest snakes. The longest Boa found on the island was slightly less than 3 m. Newborn Boas average 35 cm. Boas are not venomous but are what is called constrictor snakes; they kill by wrapping themselves around a prey and suffocating them. The most distinctive feature of a Boa is its pattern of dark brown and tan blotches which become red toward the tail. The belly in white or cream colored with numerous black spots. Boas are excellent climbers and may be found in trees and cactus. Boas also hide in the leaves under bushes waiting to catch prey that pass. Boas catch their prey with their teeth and then constrict it in their coils. The Boa's diet consists of birds, lizards, rats, mice, and rabbits. Large Boas have been known to eat small goats and chickens. When threatened, Boas will hiss loudly. Boas are a non-native species and are invasive to the island, risking the population of native lizards and birds. The first Boas were reported on the island in 1999. Since that time they have been found across the entire island in all types of habitats. If you ever encounter a Boa, please do not approach it. Instead, please call the Arikok National Park, as they are experienced in handling Boas. □



Best spots to view the sunset

(Oranjestad)—Today we celebrate Valentine's Day, and what can be more romantic than surprising your partner with a date watching the sunset. Aruba's sunset leave many speechless, and luckily, the best spots to view the sunset are entirely accessible and easy to find. Here are some of the best places to view the sunset on the island.

California Light House

Of course, being one of the highest point easily accessible to locals and tourists, the California Light House hill not only offers a tremendous view of the sunset, but also a breath taking scenery of most of the island. In the distance you can spot all the hotels, the western shoreline and the wild waves that

crash on the northern side of the island.

Manchebo & Eagle Beach

Speaking of the western shoreline, the best spots for viewing the sunset on the beach has to be either Manchebo Beach or at Eagle Beach, which stretch along the entire western coast of the island starting from behind Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort up to the Amsterdam Manor roundabout. The sunset on these beaches is truly breathtaking; the sky and ocean look so big and spacious, and paired with the orange/pink hue of the sunset, the white sandy beaches and the soft sounds of waves crashing—it can only be described as an experience!*



Arashi Beach

Another beach that has to be considered as another great spot to view the sunset. Arashi Beach is the last beach you will find along the western coast line, just before you drive up the hill to the California Light House. A favorite for surfers and body boarders, the Arashi sky stretches out for miles, lending a spectacular canvas for the sun to create a masterpiece of orange, pink and purple hue.

Hooiberg Hill

These last two options are for more active couples. If you and your partner like to hike, the Hooiberg Hill may be a great place for you

to get your daily workout in and enjoy a beautiful view of the sunset and the island as a little reward. Climb on top the 587-step stairs and reach the top to enjoy this incredible scenery.

Casibari Rock Formation

If you're a rock climber, you might enjoy watching the sunset on top of the Casibari Rock Formation. It's no Yosemite, but it does offer a fun little exercise to get to the top. But if you prefer not to get your hands a little dirty, you can always use the stairs in the back.

Editor's note: This spot may be my personal favorite, if you couldn't already tell...☐

Craving a late-night snack? We got you covered!

(Oranjestad)—After a night out it's custom to grab yourself a late-night snack on the road. Here in Aruba, there are dozens of food trucks that you can visit to enjoy a late-night bite. Here are a few that can be found in the down town/hotel area.

Chalo burger



Chalo burger is a favorite among locals, and it's due to its popularity that it has branched out to dif-

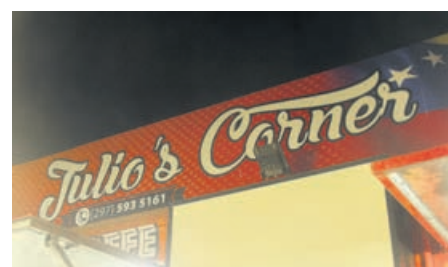
ferent parts on the island. One of its main locations is in Palm Beach, near the hotel area. Chalo offers a variety of fast-food meals, like hamburgers, hotdogs, loaded fries and more! A popular dish among locals is the Salchipapa: loaded fries with sausages, cheese and a mix of sweet and savory sauce. Perfect for those late-night cravings!

Chalo is open Wednesdays through Mondays from 7pm to 12 am (Fridays till 1am), and is located at Palm Beach 178 (a little past the roundabout near the Piazza Gianni's). Other Locations include Tanki Leendert and Savaneta.

Julio's Corner



Situated in a nice little corner off the highway, Julio's Corner has a



huge menu comprised of different dishes and snacks, all made with a Venezuelan twist! From arepa's to chicken wings, to pizzas and burgers, Julio's Corner has it all to satisfy your taste! Editor's choice for what to get at Julio's Corner is the quesadilla, which comes with a side of fries.

Julio's Corner is open Mondays through Saturday from 6pm to 2am (Fridays and Saturdays up to 4am), and is located in the parking lot of the Eagle Bowling Palace, right on the other side of the road from the Sasaki gas station.

Habibi Express

Habibi Express is a Lebanese food truck stand, one of very few food trucks on the island to sell Mediterranean food. Located right at the entrance of The Local Market near the cruise ship port, here you can



fill your stomach (and heart) with a variety of options like shawarmas, doners, kapsalons and more, all 100% halal. When asked, the chef there recommends all foodies to try their lamb shawarma, as it's a favorite among guests.

Habibi Express is open every day from 5pm to 12am. While you're there, how about a picture with the genie? ☐



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MANA celebrates Museum Day 2024 with a program for the public focused on Research and Education

(Oranjestad)—The National Archaeological Museum Aruba (MANA), along with some other museums, will open its doors to celebrate International Museum Day this Friday, May 18th. The theme set by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) for International Museum Day 2024 is Research and Education.

Research and Education are the two most important goals in MANA's mission. On this celebration day, MANA will offer visitors an educational program based on research, and will also officially launch its new website. The doors will be open from 10 am to 2 pm, and a voluntary donation is requested for entry.

Under the name National Archaeological Museum Aruba (MANA), the new website will be launched at 10:30 am in a festive manner in the auditorium. The goal of the website is to inform, educate, and provide better services to the Aruban and international community. The information provided by MANA to its users is based on conducted research. The website offers updated information about MANA.

The theme of Research and Education will also be realized in a lecture by archaeologist Raymundo Dijkhoff. Its title is "Oruma: Beach, an archaeological perspective" and will take place from 12:30 to 1:30 pm in MANA's auditorium.

For those who wish to enjoy snacks, a variety of small dishes will be available. Among others, there will be goat soup, tuna bread, Johnny Cake with codfish or cheese, coffee, tea (bush tea), juice, Upside Down cake, and vegan carrot cake.

As is customary at MANA, there will be continuous activities for children as well. So, parents who wish to attend the presentations can do so while their children enjoy themselves with hands-on activities.

Come and see all the new things in the exhibition halls, listen to and exchange ideas with archaeologist Dijkhoff about research and the development of the beach, and educate yourself a little more about the history of our ancestors. □



Papiamento words and phrases you may want to know!

(Oranjestad)—Aruba is a melting pot of different nationalities, cultures and languages. Primarily for this reason, the average Aruban can understand and speak Dutch, English and Spanish relatively well. However, as much as we pride ourselves in being able to communicate with almost everyone, we cherish our native tongue Papiamento above all else. Want to learn some common words in our language? Here are a few basic words and phrases that can get you a hat tip from an Aruban.

When you arrive at the airport in Aruba, one of the first words in Papiamento you may encounter is "Bon bini." Bon bini in Papiamento means welcome, and is probably the most famous Papiamento word for tourists.

Hi! Bye!

To be fair, there is no unique way to say "hello" in Papiamento. At least, not officially. We often just use the English "hello" or "hey", or Dutch "hallo" to greet someone. We do however, always follow it up with "con bay?" or "con ta?" Con bay is a shortened version of "con ta bay?", which essentially means "how are you?"

The word "con" in Papiamento



means "how?" and is pronounced with a rounder "o" sounds, like in the English word "cone". "Ta bay" refers to how you are doing.

When we say goodbye, we use the word "ayo" (not like the Ayo Rock Formation, but also...kinda?). We may also use "te oro", which means "see you later".

Greetings during the day

Most, if not all, languages have different ways to greet according to the time of day, and Papiamento is no different. Since Papiamento is heavily influenced from Portuguese and Spanish, some of these phras-

es may look very familiar.

1. Bon dia is used in the morning, up to about noon. Bon dia essentially means good morning. The word "bon" means "good", and while "dia" does not directly mean "morning" in English, it is used often to refer to the morning time.
2. Bon tardi. In the afternoon to early evening hours, we use "bon tardi" to greet people, which means "good afternoon". "Tardi" actually comes from the word "atardi", which directly translates to "afternoon". However, the short-

ened "tardi" is used to keep the rhythm on the phrase. And the same could be said for our last greeting of the day.

3. Bon nochi. You guessed it, "bon nochi" means "good night". Just like "tardi", "nochi" is actually the shortened version of the word "anochi".

Yes...no...maybe?

The affirmative and negative expression is very simple in Papiamento. Just like Spanish, our yeses are "si" and our no's are "no". Pretty easy right? If you want to gain some extra points from younger locals, you can also say "se", which is a more casual affirmative used mostly by the younger generation. However, do note: some older generations may find this improper and not respectful, so keep that in mind.

Thanks man...

Lastly, a word that we can also say more often is "danki", which means literally "thank you". "Danki" is derived from the Dutch word "bedankt". Though we don't really have a translation for "I appreciate it" in English, we do use "masha danki" to convey the message. "Masha" means "a lot" or "very", so "masha danki" means "thank you very much". □

Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use

(Oranjestad)—Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

Pineapple



Pineapple has more uses than topping it on your Christmas ham. According to elders, the skin of a pineapple is great to use to refresh your body. Clean the skin thoroughly and make tea or warapa* with it.

It is said that this tea can also be drank after an operation on the ovaries or uterus. This gets rid of irritation and inflammation.

When the fruit is unripe and green, this can be used to stimulate menstruation flow in women. This also stimulates the passing kidney stones. When ripe, the fruit can be used for poisoning in the gut and can help treat rheumatic diseases, like arthritis.

However, breastfeeding women who cannot produce much milk are advised not to consume too pineapple, and people with acid reflux are recommended to not consume any pineapple at all.

Arrowroot



Arrowroot is native to tropical America and can be sold as a powder or whole. It is said that you can take arrowroot powder and make a "shalup" (porridge) for stomach pain or when you're feeling weak. You can make it with milk too, but it is advised to best use just water. You can also add prunes for a bit of sweetness. Arrowroot shalup is also good to treat an unhealthy gut or for diarrhea.

To make arrowroot shalup, boil a bit of water and add one tablespoon of arrowroot powder and stir continuously until you reach porridge consistency. If you make a shalup with milk, add a pinch of salt. Raw arrowroot powder can be used to powder babies.

Eggplant/Aubergine

Eggplants, or aubergines, are easy to find in supermarkets around the world and can be grown all year round on the island. Related to potato and tomato, eggplants are good to calm nerves. It can also be



used to lower blood pressure, by steeping its leaves in boiled water and drinking it. You can also make eggplant juice to help purify your blood. However, do make sure to drink slowly; let it mix with your spit and then swallow.

Eggplant kataplan* can also be used to treat skin tumors, abscesses and hemorrhoids. Eggplant kataplan can also be used externally to treat arthritis.

*warapa: term referring to a water and sugar solution, a.k.a simple syrup.

*kataplan: porridge-like mixture used externally for wounds or parts of the body that are painful or swollen.

Visit the island's popular cave sites!



(Oranjestad)—Among the endless sea of dark brown sand and cacti, there are two caves hidden in the outskirts of San Nicolas, in the north-eastern area of the island. These caves, The Quadirikiri cave and The Fontein Cave are open to visitors of the Arikok National Park, so if you ever decide to take an “off-road” tour in the park, be sure to visit these prehistoric caves...and be sure to bring a flashlight!

Quadirikiri Cave

Known for its two chambers accompanied by a skylight, the Quadirikiri Cave is the most popular cave among locals and tourists, as it is easy to walk through and provides great lighting for pictures.

As with all prehistoric or ancient sites, there is always a folk legend that adds to the lore and mystery of the site. The Quadirikiri cave is no different. The most well-known legend behind the cave could be considered as Aruba's first love story, as it tells the tale of the undying love between the chief's daughter and her beloved. As legend would have it, the chief disapproved of his daughter's choice of lover, as he thought him unworthy. Stubborn and filled with anger, the daughter refused to turn away her beloved.

So, the chief decided to lock her up in the Quadirikiri

Cave, in hopes that she would soon calm down and turn away her lover. Her beloved, in turn, was locked away in the Tunnel of Love (Now known as the Huliba Cave).

Through the pathways underneath the Tunnel of Love running up to the Quadirikiri cave, the two love birds found each other, and refused to let each other go. Because of their stubbornness, they both died in the Quadirikiri Cave, their ascending spirits burning two holes in the ceiling of the cave. This is why the cave has two holes through which sunlight passes through to illuminate the chamber.

Though there have been discoveries of Amerindian drawing on the wall, these have mostly been ruined by vandalism. However, the Fontein Cave further up north, provides a better glimpse in prehistoric Amerindian paintings.

Fontein Cave

Longer than the Quadirikiri Cave, the Fontein Cave contains pathways that stretch to the limestone walls further down. Here is also where prehistoric drawings can be seen. Though this cave does not have its own legend, this was speculated to have been occupied—or at least used by prehistoric Arawak settlers on the island for rituals and other spiritual

ceremonies.

The Huliba Cave/ Tunnel of Love

The Huliba Cave, formerly known as the Tunnel of Love, was once open to the public, and was the biggest and most accessible of all three caves. This cave had five chambers, including one that is heart-shaped. This cave had narrow stairs that led to long pathways deep into the cave, with a staircase leading to the exit on the other side. In one of the chambers, there used to be the carving of the Virgin Mary, put there for the protection of the cave.

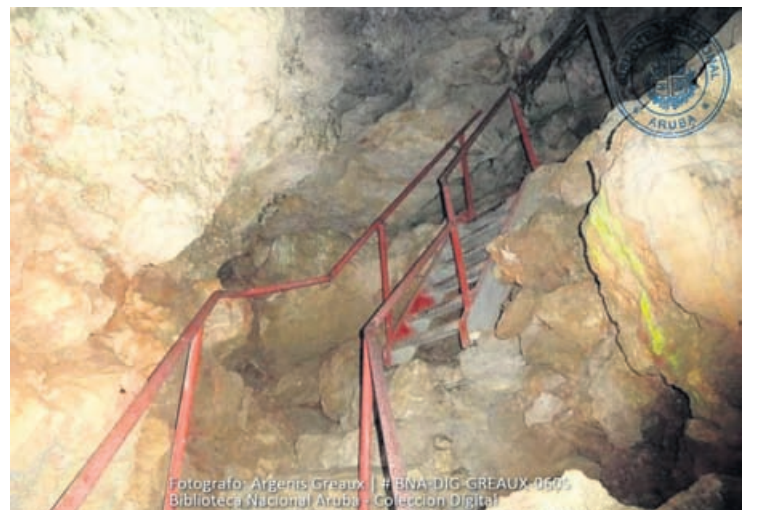
However, the Huliba Cave has been permanently closed for a few years now, as a way to preserve the bat population that lives in the cave. These Long Tongue Fruit Bats and Insect Eater Bats are very important to the ecosystem of the island. Though this cave is no longer accessible to the public, it surely is interesting to learn more about the history of these caves and the Awarak tribes that resided or utilized them.

Do note that these caves are very dark, humid, hot, and are inhabited by bats. Do wear comfortable clothing and shoes, as the pathways in these caves may be rough and bumpy, and don't forget to bring a flashlight! □

Note to visitors:

Due to heavy rainfall in the past few days, Arikok National Park has informed that they have closed the Quadirikiri Cave until further notice for the safety of visitors.

Fontein remains open from 9am to 4pm.



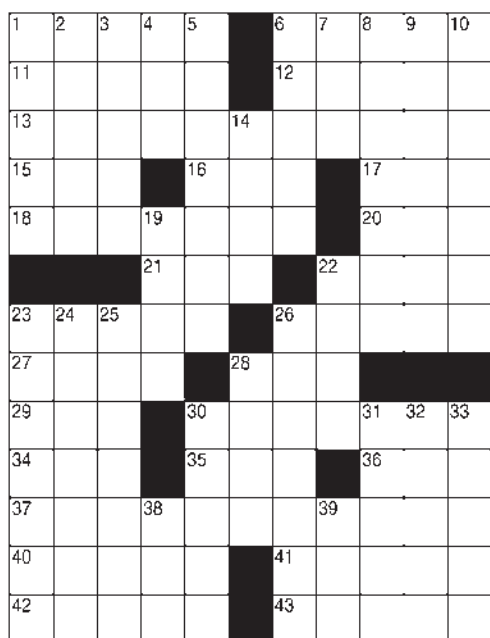
CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 41 Less bright
1 Book of maps
6 Puts away entries
11 Rein for rover
12 Insertion sign
13 Right away
15 Garden tool
16 Feel poorly
17 Bar rocks
18 Showed up
20 Spinning toy
21 Tennis need
22 Viral concept
23 Kicks back
26 Kitchen gadget
27 Trade fair
28 Gift topper
29 Clumsy one
30 Carrot's cousin
34 Buddy
35 Make mistakes
36 Keats work
37 Uncertain of success
40 Deplete
- DOWN**
- 1 Island greeting
2 Choir member
3 In a while
4 Tough wood
5 Stalk bundles
6 Bawl out
7 Letter after
8 Satellite
9 Mat word
10 More precipitous
14 Losing scheme
19 Wild about
22 Does a yard job
23 Angrily rebuke
24 Wide sweep
25 Ghost
26 Morally bad
28 Biting remark
30 Small sounds
31 Stately
32 Does nothing
33 Jury members
38 Engine sound
39 Butter unit



Yesterday's answer



5-14

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-14

CRYPTOQUOTE

QWU YRRPT SGU NRXUNK,
PSGJ SMP PUUC, ABQ H WSXU
CGRDHTUT QR JUUC, SMP
DHNUT QR ER AUVRGU H
TNUUC. — GRAUGQ VGRTQ

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: A HARMONIOUS
FAMILY LEADS TO PROSPERITY IN
EVERYTHING — CHINESE PROVERB

Cruise ship Schedule: May 01 - May 28 2024

TUE	07	CARNIVAL MAGIC	09.00	22.00	C	1
TUE	14	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS CARNIVAL HORIZON	08.00 08.00	21.00 22.00	B C	1 1
WED	15	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	21	CELEBRITY BEYOND CARNIVAL VISTA	08.00 13.00	21.00 23.00	B C	1 1
WED	22	CARNIVAL CELEBRATION	08.00	22.00	C	1
MON	27	ISLAND PRINCESS	09.00	22.00	C	1
TUE	28	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Supermarket hours



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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24/7

Melinda French Gates resigns as Gates Foundation co-chair, 3 years after her divorce from Bill Gates



Co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Melinda French Gates smiles as she leaves the Elysee Palace, June 23, 2023, in Paris.

By **THALIA BEATY**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Melinda French Gates will step down as co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the nonprofit she and her ex-husband Bill Gates founded and built into one of the world's largest philanthropic organizations over the past 20 years. "This is not a decision I came to lightly," French Gates posted on the X platform on Monday. "I am immensely proud of the foundation that Bill and I built together and of the extraordinary work it is doing to address inequities around the world." She praised the foundation's CEO, Mark Suzman, and the foundation's board of trustees, which was significantly expanded after the couple announced their divorce in May 2021. "The time is right for me to move forward into the next chapter of my philanthropy," French Gates wrote in her statement. She organizes some of her investments and philanthropic gifts through her organization, Pivotal Ventures, which is not a nonprofit. Bill Gates thanked French Gates for her "critical" contributions to the foundation in a statement, saying, "I am sorry to see her leave, but I am sure she will have a huge impact in her future philanthropic work."

The foundation will change its name to the Gates Foundation, a spokesperson said. French Gates will receive \$12.5 billion as part of her agreement with Gates, which she said would commit to future work focused on women and families. The foundation said that Gates would supply those funds and they would not come out of the foundation's endowment. The Gates Foundation is a massive funder of global health, supporting major international institutions like Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the World Health Organization and The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. It also funds

research into a wide range of topics like child malnutrition and maternal health as well as eradicating polio and treating and preventing malaria. The foundation has also funded with billions of dollars the development of interventions and research meant to help small farmers adapt to climate change. In the U.S., it funded education policy and research that had sweeping, if mixed, effects, and now, has pledged to increase its support around antipoverty initiatives. In an emailed statement, the foundation said that Suzman announced French Gates' decision to employees on Monday.

Associated Press

"After a difficult few years watching women's rights rolled back in the U.S. and around the world, she wants to use this next chapter to focus specifically on altering that trajectory," Suzman said of French Gates. Suzman said he knew many had joined the foundation in part because of their admiration for her advocacy, especially around gender equity.

"I know how beloved Melinda is here," Suzman wrote. The Gates Foundation holds \$75.2 billion in its endowment as of December 2023, and announced in January, it planned to spend \$8.6 billion through the course of its work in 2024.

The Associated Press receives financial support for news coverage in Africa from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and for news coverage of women in the workforce from Pivotal Ventures. □



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More U.S. parents than ever have paid leave this Mother's Day - but most still don't

By **ALEXANDRA OLSON and CLAIRE SAVAGE**

AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — More working U.S. parents than ever are celebrating their first Mother's Day with hard-fought access to paid time off to care for newborns. But the majority still must forego pay to care for new babies or other loved ones, even as efforts to expand paid parental and family leave gain traction.

Bipartisan groups in the U.S. Senate and House have revived efforts to expand paid family leave to more workers, with momentum building to introduce legislation this year. In the absence of a federal law, 13 states plus the District of Columbia have adopted paid family and medical leave laws, which entitle workers to paid time off to care for newborns or other loved ones who require care. Still, just 27% of civilian workers in the U.S. get paid family leave, according to the latest data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Workers who can least afford to take unpaid time off are also the least likely to have access to paid leave: According to the BLS, just 14% percent of workers in the lowest 25% wage category get that benefit, compared to 48% of those in the top 10%.

For families without paid leave, babies "are going to day care when they are two weeks old. They do not even have immunizations. They're not on regular feeding patterns. Moms are giving up breastfeeding far sooner than they would like to," Elizabeth Gedmark, vice president at nonprofit advocacy organization A Better Balance, said during a recent virtual conference to advocate for federal paid family leave organized by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The U.S. is one of just of seven countries — and the only industrialized one — that does not have a national paid maternity leave policy, according to the World Policy Analysis Cen-



Carrie Martin-Haley holds her son outside their home Friday, May 10, 2024, in Greenwood Village, Colo.

ter at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Caitlyn Householder has become an advocate for a universal paid family leave law in Pennsylvania since she was forced to quit her job as a floor supervisor of a clothing company five ago when she learned that she was pregnant shortly after being diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's B-Cell Lymphoma.

Householder, of Ellwood City, Pennsylvania, could hardly drive herself to work because of agonizing pain in her leg, and it quickly became apparent that her employer wouldn't allow her to take enough time off for her medical needs.

"They showed their true colors," said Householder, who shared her story through the Children First, a organization campaigning for Pennsylvania's proposed law.

Householder's husband, an oil rig worker, also gets no paid parental or family leave to care for her and their kids. Most of the time, Householder took her baby and stepdaughter with her to the radiation treatments. When her husband did take off work, such as when Householder couldn't

hold her baby for 24 hours after radiation, it meant foregoing hundreds of dollars in income. The family fell behind on mortgage payments during the most difficult months.

Pennsylvania's House and Senate are considering legislation that would provide up to 20 weeks of paid family leave through a payroll tax. The proposed measure has bipartisan sponsorship but some Republicans have vocally opposed it because of the cost to taxpayers.

Disagreements over how to fund family leave programs have been an obstacle in other states, and have long thwarted efforts to pass a federal law. Democrats generally favor funding such programs through payroll taxes, while many Republicans prefer tax incentives to encourage, but not require, employers to offer paid leave.

In January, a House bipartisan group led by Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, a Pennsylvania Democrat, and Rep. Stephanie Bice, an Oklahoma Republican, released a four-part framework to extend paid family leave to more workers, including funding for state

programs or stronger tax breaks for small businesses to do so.

In a statement, Bice said the group is "excited about the momentum and will continue working together to craft legislative text which can get across the finish line." In an interview with The Associated Press, Houlahan said she was optimistic that legislation could be introduced this year. While any measure would fall short of a federal paid leave law, Houlahan said it reflects a yearlong effort to find common ground for policies that would extend the benefit to as many workers as possible.

Colorado's benefits kicked in on Jan. 1, four years after the state's paid family and medical leave program passed by ballot measure following a failed effort to move a bill through the legislature. The law gives most Colorado workers the right to take up to 12 week of paid leave to bond with a new baby and other family needs.

The new benefits came too late for Carrie Martin-Haley's family. Neither Martin-Haley, a small business owner in Denver who gave birth to her son in Septem-

ber 2023, nor her husband had any paid time off, so Martin-Haley had to put aside her dreams of opening a brick-and-mortar storefront for her business, Summit Sustainable Goods. "That's been hard to sit with," said Martin-Haley, who shared her story through Small Business Majority, an advocacy group that is campaigning for federal paid family leave. "With the lack of sleep and everything else that comes along with new parenthood, and all of the uncertainties, finances should be the last thing on the totem pole."

Women's participation in the U.S. labor force has reached historic highs, but changes such as paid parental leave often come after long-fought campaigns by mothers.

Keenan Manzo of Dallas, a mother of three who has worked as a Southwest flight attendant for 18 years, said she launched a Facebook page for mothers at the company after having her first child 11 years ago to galvanize support for paid leave and other policies. She said paid leave often took a backseat to other priorities such as higher pay, but support grew as women shared stories of returning to work too early and struggling to pump during flights, sometimes as impatient passengers knocked on the bathroom stalls.

Southwest flight attendants finally won paid parental leave — up to eight weeks for birthing parents and two weeks for non-birth parents — in a contract ratified in April by the Transport Workers Union. TWU International President John Samuelsen called the benefit a first for an industry with a long history of sexism against flight attendants, who are mostly women.

"I fought so hard. I'm done having babies, but I still get emotional just thinking about the moms that are coming after me that have this reprieve," Manzo said. □

Charter flights for WNBA road games was an early Mother's Day gift for players with children

By DOUG FEINBERG
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Indiana's Katie Lou Samuelson says life as first-time mom got a littler easier with the WNBA's announcement that players will fly on charter flights for road games.

The announcement addressed security concerns among other issues, but was an early Mother's Day gift for the Fever wing and about a dozen other players across the league with children.

"It's going to be a lot easier traveling with a nine-month old on a charter than it would be commercially," Samuelson, who gave birth to her daughter, Aliya Renea Cannady, on Aug. 4., said in a phone interview with The Associated Press. "She'll be on a lot of the road trips."

Many players would not take their kids on the road due to the requirements for young children when flying on commercial flights.

Breanna Stewart, who has two children with wife Marta, also appreciates the new travel perk — as well as other benefits for parents under the current CBA. The benefits include:

- Players receive their full salary while on maternity leave after only getting half under the previous agreement.

- They also get a \$5,000



From left, Breanna Stewart holds daughter Ruby Mae Stewart Xargay, 6 months, next to her wife Marta Xargay Casademont and general manager Talisa Rhea before a WNBA basketball news conference in Seattle, Feb. 10, 2022.

childcare stipend and a two-bedroom apartment is provided.

— Mothers are given comfortable, protected and secluded space for nursing at arenas and access to a refrigerator to store their breastmilk.

Connecticut's DeWanna Bonner said every little bit helps.

"I hope it keeps getting better and better because people don't really understand what it takes to be a mom and play basketball or be

a mom and be in any kind of sports thing," said Bonner, who has six-year old twins. "It's very mentally draining. So just for them to provide any and everything they can to support you, it's exciting." Sun coach Stephanie White said things are much better for players than when she played.

White remembers the challenges former teammate Niele Ivey faced after giving birth to her son Jaden, who is now 22 and just finished his second season with the

NBA's Detroit Pistons.

"There wasn't a lot available. She would bring him to practice and he'd sit in his car seat or, you know, somebody would come with her and he'd sit with her," White said. "On the road it was, you know, sharing a room at the time because I don't even know if veterans got their own room. So you'd have to pay for a separate room or pay for people to come with you."

Some teams have also stepped up at their arenas.

Phoenix has had a family room for kids to play in since 2018 before, during and after games. The team debuted a brand new one during Suns game this season and the Mercury families will be able to take advantage of it this season.

Stewart hopes even more be get done for parents in the next CBA. The players or the league could opt out of the current CBA after this season. "We're in a much better place than we ever were with these benefits," Stewart said before pointing out the stipend isn't per child. "It should be a per child situation. Kids are expensive. If the league can help, let's really do it."

Stewart said the number of years to qualify for the family planning benefits in the CBA needs to be reduced.

Players who have played eight or more seasons can be reimbursed up to \$20,000 for costs per year directly related to adoption, surrogacy, egg freezing or fertility/infertility treatment. That amount is capped at \$60,000 total per player.

"That's a long time. ... it's hard to get to that point," Stewart said of the eight-year mark as players remain in the league on average for about five years. "It's a benefit I'm sure a lot of players would love to take advantage of." □

Associated Press

Giancarlo Stanton proves he's King of Swing in MLB's latest metric advancements

By DAVID BRANDT
AP Baseball Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — Giancarlo Stanton has smashed 410 homers in his big-league career, and even though the New York Yankees slugger has slowed down in recent seasons, the 6-foot-6, 245-pounder still seems to take some of the most vicious cuts in baseball.

Now there are numbers that prove it.

Major League Baseball debuted new metrics on its Baseball Savant website Monday, unveiling categories that measure some of the

reasons that the game's best hitters are so darn good.

Stanton is the king of swings as it relates to bat speed. The sweet spot of the slugger's bat barrel travels through the strike zone at an average of 80.6 mph, which is far ahead of Pittsburgh's Oneil Cruz, who is in second place at 77.7 mph. Stanton also leads the league with a 98.4% fast swing percentage, which measures how often he swings over 75 mph. The average big leaguer's swing is 72 mph.

In all, there are six new categories and five of them focus on hitters, including average

bat speed, fast swing rate, squared up rate, blasts and swing length. For those who are statistically inclined, it's a baseball dork's paradise. Some of the categories — like bat speed — are fairly straightforward. Others take a little more explaining. And math.

For example, the squared-up rate takes into account the hitter's bat speed and a pitcher's velocity. MLB uses an example that includes a homer hit by Minnesota Twins outfielder Trevor Larnach, who took a 75.6 mph swing on a 98.8 mph fastball.



New York Yankees' Giancarlo Stanton hits an RBI double during the ninth inning of a baseball game against the Detroit Tigers, Friday, May 3, 2024, in New York.

Associated Press

After a little more calculus, MLB says that adds up to a potential 113.4 mph exit velocity and the ball left Larnach's

bat at 110 mph. That means it was 97% squared up. Anything over 80% counts as a squared-up swing. □

Halfway Home: Count on surprises, familiar faces in second half of NASCAR's regular season

By PETE IACOBELLI

AP Sports Writer

DARLINGTON, S.C. (AP) —

The first half of NASCAR's regular season wrapped with a satisfying, drought-busting win by past champion Brad Keselowski at Darlington Raceway.

Keselowski, in his third full season as a driver-owner at Roush Fenway Keselowski Racing, locked himself into the playoffs and marked himself as a title contender for the fall.

There are several other usual suspects to watch including 2021 Cup Series winner Kyle Larson, his Hendrick Motorsports teammate William Byron and Joe Gibbs Racing leader Denny Hamlin, who is tied with Byron for the series lead with three victories this season.

Not so fast, said former driver and current NASCAR TV analyst Jeff Burton. Just look at the past two champions in Penske racers Joey Logano and Ryan Blaney. "Raise your hand if you had them winning the championships this time of year these past two years," Burton said. "It's very hard to know what's going to happen."

But it's not difficult to make a few logically informed predictions as the circuit heads into its All-Star Week-



Kyle Larson, center, celebrates in Victory Lane after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Kansas Speedway in Kansas City, Kan., Sunday, May 5, 2024.

Associated Press

end at North Wilkesboro. Hendrick Motorsports, Joe Gibbs Racing Strong Once More JGR's Hamlin has been on a championship quest since coming up short last season and has had one of the strongest cars each week. Along with his three victories, Hamlin has led laps at each race this season and finished fourth at the Good-year 400 this past Sunday. Christopher Bell, who won at Phoenix, gives JGR two

playoff participants so far. Byron and Larson are leading the Hendrick charge, combining for five wins this season including Byron's success at the Daytona 500 to start Hendrick's 40th anniversary season. Chase Elliott's victory at Texas gives Rick Hendrick three spots in the playoffs with Alex Bowman, who was eighth at Darlington this past week, the only team driver without a win. Bowman sits ninth in the standings.

Byron said at Darlington he needed to be more consistent in this upcoming summer stretch to prepare for the playoffs.

"We have the pace," Byron said. "I feel like that's what you're really striving for, to have pace to win races. We have that, it's just that we're not consistently putting the weekends together, in terms of balance and execution."

FORD CHARGING FORWARD

Keselowski's victory at Darlington was the first for a Ford this season, but likely won't be the last. Keselowski's RFK Racing driver Chris Buescher, who has won four times since Keselowski became a co-owner in 2022, has come agonizing close to winning again the past two races.

Buescher lost a photo finish to Larson at Kansas two weeks ago by 0.001 second, the closest finish in NASCAR history. At Darlington, Buescher got knocked into the wall by Tyler Reddick while leading with nine laps to go.

Neither Buescher nor Reddick, 1-2 at the time, were contending after their tangle and Buescher angrily confronted Reddick after both got out of their cars.

Those were tough for Buescher to deal with, but it's likely he won't disappear in the season's second half. In fact, there were four Ford drivers among the top seven finishers at Darlington.

WHO ELSE?

Neither of the past two series champs in Logano and Blaney have won a race to assure themselves the post-season, although Blaney is in better position at eighth in the standings while Logano is 17th, first out of the 16-driver field. □



Two watches belonging to Michael Schumacher are on display: F.P., left, Journe, Invenit et Fecit, piece Unique, Vagabondage 1 Model, it is estimated to sell between 1,200,000 to 2,300,000 U.S. dollars and Audemars Piguet, right, Royal Oak Chronograph model, it is estimated to sell between 180,000 to 280,000 U.S. dollars, during a preview at the Christie's, in Geneva, Switzerland, Thursday, May 9, 2024.

Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — Eight luxury watches belonging to Formula One great Michael Schumacher are going up for sale at Christie's on Tues-

day. The sale, organized by Schumacher's family, features a watch that was given to the German rac-

8 watches owned by Formula One great Michael Schumacher are going up for auction

ing superstar by former Ferrari CEO and former motorsports governing body FIA President Jean Todt as a Christmas present in 2004, when Schumacher was the dominant force in F1.

The custom-made timepiece features 18-carat white gold, a red watch face and images of a Ferrari logo, Schumacher's racing helmet and the number 7 to honor his seven World Championship victories. The presale estimate suggested it could bring as much as 2 million Swiss francs (about \$2.2 million), Christie's said. Other Schumacher watches include five in a single box

set that will be auctioned off individually. The sale has been timed for the 30th anniversary of his first Formula One Drivers Championship win in 1994.

"We were approached by the family to put these pieces up for auction, and the reason is unknown to us," said Eli Fayon, a Christie's watches specialist.

The watches, which were taken to New York and Taipei for showings before the sale, are part of a larger auction of luxury timepieces to go under the hammer on Tuesday at Christie's in Geneva.

Also on Tuesday, Sotheby's

was set to hold a jewelry auction featuring a 100-carat yellow diamond with a presale estimate of up to 6.5 million francs (\$7.2 million). Schumacher, who retired from F1 in 2012, shares the record for most F1 titles with British driver Lewis Hamilton. In December the following year, Schumacher fell while skiing in the French Alpine resort of Meribel and suffered a near-fatal brain injury. His head hit a rock which split open his helmet. Doctors removed blood clots but others were left untouched because they were too deeply embedded in his brain. □